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**Assessing outgroup prejudice among secondary school pupils in northern
England: introducing the Outgroup Prejudice Index (OPI)**

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Abstract

The Outgroup Prejudice Index is a six-item scale that uses social distance to assess prejudice towards ethnic and religious out groups among Asians and Whites. It was developed among a sample of 2982 teenagers attending schools in northern England who indicated their religion as either 'Muslim', 'Christian' or 'no religion'. The scale demonstrated internal consistency reliability among both Asian (Cronbach's alpha = .78) and White (Cronbach's alpha = .85) pupils. The scale demonstrated construct validity in two ways: scores were correlated with a second scale based on stereotyped attitudes, and were also lower among those with friends in outgroups, suggesting the index was a valid measure of ethnic or religious outgroup prejudice.

Introduction

The issue of multiculturalism is one of both social and political importance in Britain, where successive waves of immigration over the last six decades have resulted in a complex mix of ethnic and racial groups (Ansari, 2004; Holmes, 1988; Panayi, 1999, 2004; Smith, 2007; Solomos, 2003). The distribution of various ethnic or religious groups is not uniform, and some communities have a more diverse cultural mix than others (Simpson, 2004; Simpson *et al.*, 2008). It is in these more diverse communities that social cohesion can sometimes be difficult to achieve (Cantle, 2001; Denham, 2001; McGhee, 2006; Webster, 2003), and where assessing and understanding attitudes is an urgent need. Key among these attitudes will be those directed toward ‘outgroups’, that is those who are of a different ethnic or religious background. A number of different approaches to measuring outgroup prejudice have been developed in the last few years. This paper reports on the internal reliability and construct validity of a scale of outgroup prejudice developed among secondary school pupils in three communities in northern England.

There is a long history of sociological studies of the relationships between groups of different ethnic or religious backgrounds that co-exist in the same communities. In Western societies this interest includes studies of attitudes of the majority toward minorities, such as whites toward African-Americans in the USA (Bogardus, 1928; Hughes and Tuch, 2003; Johnson and Marini, 1998; Westie, 1953), indigenous European populations towards immigrants (McLaren, 2003; Pettigrew *et al.*, 1997; Pettigrew and Meertens, 1995; Schlueter and Wagner, 2008; Schneider, 2008; Stephan *et al.*, 1999) and those from a predominantly Christian background toward Jews or Muslims (Duriez and Hutsebaut, 2000; Eisinga *et al.*, 1999; Jacobson, 1998). Such studies generally rely on measures that attempt to operationalize an

underlying attitude of prejudice, fear or loathing linked to concepts such as racism and Islamophobia.

In recent years, cognitive psychologists have tended to rely on implicit methods of identifying these underlying attitudes (Degner and Wentura, 2008; Fazio *et al.*, 1995; Fazio and Olson, 2003). Implicit methods have the advantage that they can reveal attitudes that participants may normally hide, but they require intensive investigation, so samples are often small and based on volunteer undergraduates tested in university laboratories. Self-report methods, although open to bias due to participants avoiding socially unacceptable responses, are the best method for comparing attitude toward outgroups among large samples in a range of social contexts.

Another recognized way of operationalizing prejudice involves identifying items that typify stereotypes found among the majority population being investigated. A long-standing approach is to ask subjects to select or score a range of positive or negative traits or characteristics associated a particular outgroup (Eysenck and Crown, 1948; Katz and Braly, 1933, 1935; Linville *et al.*, 1989; Madon *et al.*, 2001; Williams and Best, 1982). A high level of negative stereotyping is associated with increased perception of threat from outgroups and a greater likelihood of prejudice (Mackie and Smith, 1998).

Social psychologists have also drawn on the widely used concept of 'social distance' to measure discrimination or prejudice (Bogardus, 1928, 1959; Ethington, 2007). This concept is conceived of as a mixture of physical and spatial proximity and more metaphorical understandings of distance relating to differences in social class or social location. Social distance has been used in this way to assess prejudice associated with race (Bogardus, 1928; Westie, 1953), mental illness (Angermeyer and

Matschinger, 1997; Brockman and D'Arcy, 1978; Corrigan *et al.*, 2001) and religion (Brinkerhoff and Jacob, 1994).

Brockett, Village and Francis (2009) developed the Attitude toward Muslim Proximity Index by analysing attitudes among 1777 white secondary school children in northern England. The scale was based on physical and social distance, using items related to the idea of having Muslims living at various distances from the respondent, to having Muslims marry into the family, and to mixing with Muslims wearing cultural dress (the hijab). The study showed that notions of proximity could be used to measure prejudice toward Muslims among White secondary school pupils. The advantage of the scale was that it was based on a range of notions surrounding 'proximity' of the outgroup, including different levels of proximity. One limitation of the scale was that it was applicable to White attitudes toward Muslims, but not vice versa.

This paper is based on a second, larger study among pupils from the same three communities in northern England. The aim was to develop a scale using concepts related to the Attitude toward Muslim Proximity Index, but one that was generalizable across ethnic or religious groups. In particular, the aim was to produce a reliable and valid scale that was comparable in measuring attitude toward outgroups among Christians, among Muslims and among those of no religious affiliation. Such a scale would allow underlying, cross-cultural predictors of outgroup prejudice to be identified and examined in different racial or religious groups.

Method

Sample

Questionnaires were administered by class teachers during normal school activities to pupils aged 11-16 years during 2007 and 2008 in three areas of northern England: Blackburn, Kirklees and York. All pupils were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, and given the opportunity to opt out of the survey. Response rates were high, and nearly all pupils agreed to complete the questionnaire. The catchments of the Blackburn and Kirklees schools included a higher proportion of Muslims than the catchment of the York schools (Office for National Statistics, Statistics, 2003: Table KS07). This was reflected in the samples in this study where Muslims comprised 26% ($n = 930$) in Blackburn, 42% ($n = 1376$) in Kirklees, and <1% ($n = 2116$) in York. Respondents from other religious groups (Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and other religion) made up less than 3% of the total sample and were excluded from the analysis.

Pupils were asked to indicate their ethnicity using standard categories. Of 4243 valid responses, 75.5% were 'White', 19.5% were 'Asian' and the remainder either 'Black' (1.0%), a mixture of race (2.1%) or some other ethnic group (1.9%). Analyses reported in the present paper were confined to White or Asian respondents who classed their religion as 'Muslim' ($n = 573$), 'Christian' ($n = 1410$) or 'no religion' ($n = 999$).

Measures

A number of items were included in the questionnaire to assess attitude toward having people of different race or religion (referred here as those of the 'outgroup') in proximity to the respondent (Table 1). Six items asked pupils how they would feel

about having a family moving in next door that was of a particular race or religion (Asian, Muslim, Black, White, Sikh or Christian). Responses were scored from one (= I would love it) to five (= I would hate it). Two items asked about how students felt about the idea of 'going out with' a boy or girl from a different religious or racial background. These items were scored from one (= I would be very happy) to five (= I would be very unhappy). A further two items were statements suggesting that people of a different religion, or people of a different race, should not 'hang out together'. These items were scored from one (= strongly disagree) to five (= strongly agree). For this group of young people, 'going out' generally means dating in some sort of romantic relationship, and 'hanging out' means mixing together as friends.

A second set of nine items examined stereotyped attitudes to the above racial or religious groups (Asian, Muslim, Black, White, Sikh or Christian) using seven-point bipolar scales based on positive or negative characteristics. For each of the six groups, pupils were offered nine pairs of items: 'Easy to talk to' versus 'Scary', 'Good' versus 'Bad', 'Open-minded' versus 'Narrow-minded', 'Respectful' versus 'Disrespectful', 'Generous' versus 'Greedy', 'Polite' versus 'Rude', 'Friendly' versus 'Unfriendly', 'Clever' versus 'Stupid' and 'Trustworthy' versus 'Untrustworthy'. In each case the most positive description scored one and the most negative scored seven. Scores were summed for each test group, and used as a measure of attitude toward that particular ethnic or religious group (Table 2).

Pupils were also asked how many friends they had of a different race and of a different religion, and responses were categorised as none; one; between two and five and more than five.

Analysis

There was a strong association of ethnicity and religion, with all but 2 of the 573 Muslims being Asian and all but 19 of the 2309 Christians or those of no religion being White. The Outgroup Prejudice Index was calculated independently for Whites and Asians because each of these groups would have a different outgroup. For each ethnic group, items concerned with next-door neighbours, with going out and with hanging out were first subject to a factor analysis using principal components analysis and a varimax rotation (Kim and Mueller, 1978; McKennell, 1970). The aim was to maximize the difference between groups of items to identify those that had the highest uniformity of response. Items identified from this analysis that seemed most likely to form a scale measuring outgroup prejudice were then tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951).

Scores for bipolar items measuring stereotyped attitude toward a particular ethnic or religious group were summed to give a total score for that group. Scales were constructed for attitude toward outgroups using scores relevant to Asians (attitude to Whites, Christians, Blacks and Sikhs) and Whites (attitude to Asians, Muslims, Blacks and Sikhs). This scale, along with the measures of number of outgroup friends was then used to test the construct validity of the outgroup prejudice scale on assumption that negative attitude should be positively correlated with outgroup prejudice, and greater numbers of outgroup friends should be associated with lower outgroup prejudice.

Results

Responses to the items related to outgroup prejudice indicated that negative affect was generally a minority response, with the most negative score (34%) being among Whites to the idea of Muslim neighbours (Table 1). The least negative responses

came from Asians to the idea of Muslim neighbours, and from Whites to the idea of White neighbours. Responses to Blacks and Sikhs were fairly similar across the ethnic categories. Responses to the two items on ‘hanging out’ with outgroups were overwhelmingly positive or neutral, but less so for the idea of ‘going out’ with someone.

The items on attitude toward ethnic or religious groups were also generally positive or neutral (Table 2). Again, the overall pattern was for more negative responses to the likely outgroup. Thus Whites responded more negatively to Asians or Muslims than to Whites or Christians, while Asians responded more negatively to Whites or Christians than to Asians or Muslims. Both Whites and Asians responded in roughly similar ways to racial groups such as Blacks or religious groups such as Sikhs.

The Outgroup Prejudice Index (OPI)

Factor analyses for both Asians and Whites identified factors that explained 76% and 70% respectively of the variance among the 10 items (Table 3). For Asians, four factors emerged, but for Whites only three. For Asians, Factor 1 represented responses to the possibility of the outgroup (Christians, Whites, Sikhs or Blacks) living next door, Factor 2 represented more positive responses to the possibility of the ingroup (Muslims or Asians) living next door, Factor 3 represented ‘hanging out’ with outgroups and Factor 4 represented ‘going out’ with outgroups. For Whites, Factor 1 represented responses to the possibility of the outgroup (Muslims, Asians, Sikhs or Blacks) living next door, Factor 2 represented more positive responses to the possibility of the ingroup (Christians or Whites) living next door, Factor 3 represented ‘hanging out’ or ‘going out’ with outgroups. The merging of ‘hanging out’ and ‘going out’ into a single factor among White but not Asian pupils is perhaps

not surprising, given that the Asians in the sample were overwhelmingly Muslims, where cultural and religious traditions discourage the notion of dating someone of the opposite sex. For Whites, ‘hanging out’ seemed to be not that different from ‘going out’, but this was not so for Asians. Items on ‘going out’ with people of a different race or religion were dropped from the outgroup prejudice index in order to make it a comparable measure for both Muslims, Christians and those of no religious affiliation.

Six-item scales of outgroup prejudice were constructed separately for Asians and Whites, excluding in each case the ingroup items (Table 4). Reliability in each case was acceptably high, with alpha coefficients of .78 and .85. The 2982 scores for this scale across the sample were approximately normally distributed around a mean of 15.9 (SD = 4.4, range = 6 – 30, median = 16.0, mode = 14).

Attitude Toward Outgroup (ATO) scale

The scores of attitude toward ethnic or racial groups were used to create four-item scales of attitude toward outgroups. For Asians, the scale consisted of scores of attitude toward Whites, Christians, Blacks and Sikhs; for Whites, the scale consisted of scores of attitude toward Asians, Muslims, Blacks and Sikhs (Table 5), and each had an alpha score indicating a very high degree of internal consistency reliability.

Validity of the OPI

The OPI was significantly positively correlated with the ATO scale ($r = .65$, $n = 2982$, $p < .001$), showing that those who were likely to avoid contact with outgroups had more negative attitudes toward them. OPI scores were significantly lower among those with at least two friends of different race or different religion, compared with those who had no friends among the outgroup (Table 6).

Discussion

Several important findings emerge from this study.

First, attitudes toward different ethnic groups and toward different religions seemed to be part of the same construct of ‘outgroup’. This was evident in the way in which responses to Asian and Muslim, or responses to White and Christian, seemed to correlate closely with each other, either when part of the outgroup or when part of the ingroup. This was likely to be so in a population where race and religion are strongly confounded, but it shows that these pupils at least may have used the terms interchangeably. More work would need to be done in populations where religion and race were less intrinsically bound together in order to test if pupils of this age discriminate between the two constructs. In Britain, where Muslims are overwhelmingly of Asian origin, and Christians are overwhelmingly White, this might be difficult.

Second, attitudes toward outgroups in this sample were generally positive or neutral rather than negative. In terms of outgroups living next door, 10-34% of pupils showed negative responses, depending on the particular ethnic / religious combination. When it came to ‘hanging out’ with outgroups, only around 5% of pupils indicated negative responses. Similarly, with the ATO scale, average scores were all on the positive end of the scale, apart from White attitudes toward Muslims, where the mean score was almost exactly at the neutral point of the scale. These findings suggest that outgroup prejudice is a minority position and future papers will examine what factors predict this position in this sample.

A third important finding is that it is possible to create a scale of outgroup prejudice among secondary pupils based on notions of proximity. Previous study of a different sample of pupils in these areas has shown that notions of physical and social

distance can be used to create scales for White attitudes toward Muslims (Brockett, et al., 2009). This paper builds on this work by creating a scale that operates in a comparable way for both Asian/Muslim groups and for Whites who are Christian or who have no religious affiliation. The Outgroup Prejudice Index is relatively easy to produce, has high internal consistency reliability, and correlates with a scale based on ethnic or religious stereotypes. Furthermore, it measures negative attitudes that are reduced by friendship with at least one member of an outgroup, suggesting it is related to racial or religious prejudice as classically defined by social psychologists.

This analysis of the items that made up the index showed that some items, such as those referring to ‘going out’, functioned differently between White and Asian pupils. This indicates the need to specify items carefully according to the particular racial or religious groups that make up ingroups or outgroups. Future work might expand this kind of research to include different areas of the UK, where the racial and religious mix might be different. This might indicate if different versions of the Outgroup Prejudice Index are required for different regions, or if the index has a general utility in most school settings.

Table 1. Items related to outgroup prejudice

		Asian (<i>n</i> =590)			White (<i>n</i> =2392)		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Negative
How would you feel if a family moved in next door that was:		%	%	%	%	%	%
	Muslim	80	18	2	17	49	34
	Asian	69	26	5	18	54	28
	Christian	46	44	10	36	59	6
	White	43	43	14	52	47	2
	Black	45	39	16	33	54	14
	Sikh	33	49	18	17	57	27
How would you feel about hanging out with someone of a different:							
	religion	73	22	5	71	24	4
	race / colour	73	22	5	69	26	5
How would you feel about going out with someone of a different:							
	religion	30	40	30	29	46	25
	race / colour	32	44	23	36	46	19

Table 2. Mean scores for stereotyped attitudes toward ethnic and religious groups

Attitude toward:	Response group:			
	Asian (<i>n</i> =590)		White (<i>n</i> =2392)	
	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>
Muslims	11.0	9.9	27.5	11.6
Asians	24.2	10.3	36.5	11.3
Christians	29.2	11.1	26.9	9.9
Whites	30.5	11.3	27.5	9.4
Blacks	31.4	11.4	32.8	11.0
Sikhs	30.1	10.6	34.9	10.2

Note: Means are based on the sum of scores for nine bipolar items with responses from 1 (= most positive attitude) to 7 (= most negative attitude), so the minimum possible score is 9, the maximum possible is 63, and 36 represents an overall neutral attitude.

Table 3. Factor analysis of outgroup items

	Factors			
Asian	1	2	3	4
White next door	.81	.16	.13	.10
Christian next door	.80	.17	-.08	.15
Sikh next door	.71	-.08	.19	-.02
Black next door	.66	.16	.29	.06
Asian next door	.26	.87	.08	.02
Muslim next door	.02	.83	-.06	-.12
Different race not hangout together	.17	.00	.93	.10
Different religion not hangout together	.17	.00	.93	.12
Different race go out together	.12	-.05	.11	.92
Different religion go out together	.06	-.06	.10	.92
White	1	2	3	
Asian next door	.83	.07	.28	
Muslim next door	.87	.03	.20	
Sikh next door	.86	.12	.15	
Black next door	.51	.42	.33	
White next door	-.15	.85	-.09	
Christian next door	.29	.74	.05	
Different race not hangout together	.13	.09	.90	
Different religion not hangout together	.16	.06	.89	
Different race go out together	.39	-.10	.62	
Different religion go out together	.47	-.17	.55	

Note: Factor loadings produced by principal component extraction and varimax rotation. Figures in bold indicate items that load on a given factor. The four factors explain 76% of the total variance for Asians and the three factors explain 70% of total variance for Whites.

Table 4. Internal consistency reliability of the Outgroup Prejudice Index

Asians (Cronbach's alpha = .78)	
How would feel about a family living next door that was:	Item-rest correlation
Christian	.47
White	.59
Black	.55
Sikh	.48
Different races should not hangout together	.54
Different religions should not hangout together	.54
Whites (Cronbach's alpha = .85)	
How would feel about a family living next door that was:	Item-rest correlation
Muslim	.70
Asian	.73
Black	.54
Sikh	.66
Different races should not hangout together	.60
Different religions should not hangout together	.60

Table 5. Internal consistency reliability of the Attitude Toward Outgroup scale

Asian (Cronbach's alpha = .85)	
Attitude toward:	Item-rest correlation
Christians	.73
Whites	.74
Blacks	.60
Sikhs	.69
White (Cronbach's alpha = .90)	
Attitude toward:	Item-rest correlation
Muslims	.81
Asians	.85
Blacks	.65
Sikhs	.81

Table 6. Mean OPI scores by number of outgroup friends

Number of friends:	Of different race			Of different religion		
	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>
None	1320	16.8	4.6	1557	16.7	4.5
1	669	15.8	4.3	548	15.4	4.3
2-5	774	15.0	4.0	663	14.9	4.0
>5	219	14.2	4.3	214	14.5	4.5
<i>F</i> =		41.3 ***			42.0 ***	

Note. *** $p < .001$

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